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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CA-01	CCO-00
	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-00
	VCE-00	M-00	AC-01	NEA-00	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OCS-03	OMB-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00
	USIE-00	USSS-00	SA-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
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R 041616Z APR 02
FM AMCONSUL LAHORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0272
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
AMEMBASSY KABUL

UNCLAS LAHORE 0097

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL, PTER, PK
SUBJECT: MUTED PUBLIC REACTION TO AL-QAEDA RAIDS IN
LAHORE

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE BY LOCAL
AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, THE SERIES OF RAIDS ON
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AL-QAEDAHIDEOUTS IN FAISALABAD AND LAHORE, BEGUN ON
MARCH 27, ELICITED ONLY A MUTED PUBLIC RESPONSE.
LOCAL PRESS REPORTING CONCENTRATED LARGELY ON THE EXTENT
TO WHICH US AGENCIES COLLABORATED WITH THE PAKISTANI
AUTHORITIES. CONSULATE CONTACTS IN LAHORE APPEAR
INDIFFERENT TO THE ARRESTS OF MAINLY ARAB FOREIGNERS,
BUT CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF US OFFICIALS.
END SUMMARY

2. SINCE THE STORY BROKE ON MARCH 29, THE PRINT
MEDIA HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH US
AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATED IN THE RAIDS AND THE CAPTURE
OF BIN LADEN DEPUTY ABU ZUBAYDA. BOTH THE URDU AND
ENGLISH PRESS CITED PRESS RELEASES FROM THE PUNJAB POLICE

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TO CONFIRM THE PRESENCE OF US OFFICIALS DURING THE OPERATIONS. "THE NATION," A NATIONAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPER, JUXTAPOSED POLICE ACCOUNTS AND QUOTES FROM GENERAL FRANKS CONFIRMING THE USE OF "US ASSETS" NEXT TO THE PUNJAB GOVERNOR'S DENIAL OF ANY US INVOLVEMENT. FEW ENGLISH OR URDU LANGUAGE PAPERS CRITICIZED THE RAIDS; ONE URDU DAILY, "PAKISTAN," CARRIED AN EDITORIAL QUESTIONING THE IMPLICATIONS OF AMERICA'S "SECRET" INVOLVEMENT FOR PAKISTAN'S SOVEREIGNTY. A SECOND SERIES OF RAIDS BY LAHORE POLICE ON SUSPECTED AL-QAEDA HIDEOUTS MONDAY NIGHT RECEIVED THE SAME SORT OF LIMITED COVERAGE. ONE ENGLISH DAILY, THE NEWS, RAN A BACK-PAGE STORY ABOUT THE EXTRADITION OF SUSPECTED AL-QAEDA MEMBERS, INCLUDING ZUBAYDA, VIA A "MYSTERIOUS" C-130 FLIGHT FROM LAHORE.

3. CONSULATE CONTACTS SEEM RELIEVED OR DISENGAGED UNCLASSIFIED

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FROM THE RAIDS. MOST AGREE THAT THE AL-QAEDA HAS NO PLACE IN PAKISTAN AND SHOW LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR THOSE FOREIGNERS ARRESTED. MANY WERE PLEASED BY THE ARRESTS AND HAD A BENEVOLENT VIEW OF INVOLVEMENT OF USG PERSONNEL, NOTING THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL POLICE. RELIGIOUS PARTIES, THOUGH SOMETIMES CRITICAL, HAVE NOT CALLED FOR ANY PRO-AL QAEDA OR ANTI-US DEMONSTRATIONS ON THIS ISSUE. THE JUMAAT-ISLAMI DEMONSTRATION ON MARCH 29 WAS AGAINST PRICE-HIKES AND INFLATION, AND AN APRIL 5 DEMONSTRATION BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS WILL PROTEST THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. A FEW INTERLOCUTORS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE US AGENCIES' FUTURE INVOLVEMENT IN PAKISTANI LAW ENFORCEMENT. OTHER CONTACTS ALSO QUESTION HOW AL-QAEDA WAS ABLE TO SNEAK INTO PAKISTAN AND HIDE, IF THE BORDER SECURITY IS AS TIGHT AS THE GOP CLAIMS. THEY SUGGESTED THAT EITHER AL-QAEDA'S OPERATIVES ARE SHREWER THAN PAKISTAN'S OWN SECURITY AGENCIES, OR THEY ARE WORKING HAND IN GLOVE WITH THE GOP INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

4. COMMENT: LAHORE HAS SEEN NO NEGATIVE FALLOUT FROM THE RAIDS, DESPITE THE PUBLICIZED US PARTICIPATION. THERE IS LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AL-QAEDA OR ITS MEMBERS. WHILE "HOT PURSUIT" ON THE AFGHAN BORDER REMAINS A FRONT BURNER ISSUE, THE US PRESENCE IN THE LAHORE AND FAISALABAD RAIDS HAS NOT BEEN VIEWED AS AN INFRINGEMENT OF PAKISTANI INDEPENDENCE; INSTEAD, IT IS A WELCOME HAND IN REMOVING UNWANTED NUISANCE. OUR CONCERN IS POSSIBLE REACTION FROM REMAINING AL-QAEDA MEMBERS AT LARGE RATHER THAN

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PUBLIC REACTION. END COMMENT

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